

our Export Import Bank policy has allowed us to grow our business in existing markets as well as open new ones.”

This company has grown its exports from 2 percent of its business to more than 10 percent. They could not have done it without the Export-Import Bank.

There are thousands of stories just like that all over the United States.

I am a cosponsor of Senator SHAHEEN's bill that would increase the lending cap for the Bank to \$160 billion and reauthorize it through 2021—not these short-term, 30-day, 60-day, 6-month extensions we have seen under this leadership in Congress.

In the past, reauthorizing the Ex-Im Bank was a bipartisan measure. Republicans used to support it as much as Democrats. But now there is a small group of Republicans, inspired by the Heritage Foundation, who have decided: Let's put an end to this Bank. Let's put an end to the opportunity for small businesses to hire Americans and export goods overseas.

Their hatred of government blinds them to the reality of this Bank and the thousands of jobs that will be lost if they have their way and eliminate the Ex-Im Bank.

They also refuse to recognize that by failing to reauthorize this Bank, U.S. businesses can't compete with businesses in other countries that will still have access to their own export financing agencies. Do you think China is going to put its export-import bank out of business? No. They just increased its size. Our major competitor has stepped up. In this case, many of the leaders in Congress are stepping back. So we are not only hurting ourselves if we can't find a way to go forward.

The Bank is set to expire at the end of the month, which is less than 4 weeks from now. I hope we can come to an agreement by then to pass a bill to reauthorize a program that is critically important to U.S. exports. I hope reasonable voices in the Republican Party will not allow a vocal minority to prevent us from reauthorizing this important program.

PATRIOT EMPLOYER TAX CREDIT ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as the number of candidates grows for the office of President, we are hearing a lot of proposals for changes in the Tax Code. Many of them are interesting, and some of them are damaging when it comes to working for middle-income families.

Sadly, we are seeing a race to the bottom on who can propose the lowest corporate tax rate, giving huge breaks to the very companies that shift jobs overseas. Most Americans don't realize this. If you want to move your production from the United States to another country, you can deduct the moving expenses from the taxes you owe America. We are subsidizing your decision to

pick up and move jobs overseas. American workers—some of them are given the sad responsibility to train the supervisors at the new overseas companies while American workers are checking out their last paychecks.

I have a different idea. Instead of rewarding corporations with lower tax bills, we should reward those companies in America that maintain their commitment to this country and its workers and give fair wages and benefits to the American workers. We call it the Patriot Employer Tax Credit Act. It is very basic.

When you look at the Tax Code, it is a huge document full of incentives and disincentives for businesses. We will reward certain things; we won't reward other things. Well, this is something we should consider rewarding.

Senator SHERROD BROWN and I have introduced the Patriot Employer Tax Credit Act, which would provide a tax credit to American companies that treat American veterans and workers the best. It puts the Tax Code on the side of these companies. These patriot employers would be eligible for a tax credit equal to 10 percent of the first \$15,000 of qualified wages for American workers, which is about \$1,200 per worker.

In order to qualify for this tax credit, these companies would have to meet five criteria. See if you think, as I do, that these are good ideas.

First, the company has to invest in American jobs. Businesses must remain headquartered here in the United States if they have ever been headquartered here before. The company would also have to maintain or increase the number of workers in the United States compared to the number of workers overseas, and not decrease the number of workers through the use of contractors. The company can't pick up and leave, move to a foreign capital to avoid paying its fair share of U.S. taxes.

First, invest in American jobs located in America.

Second, pay fair wages. A patriot employer under our bill would have to pay at least 90 percent of its employees \$15 an hour. Why do we pick \$15 an hour? Do the math: \$15 an hour, 40 hours a week, about \$30,000 a year. Why? Because if you make that amount of money, you qualify for virtually no Federal subsidies, Federal programs. You are earning a paycheck and you are supporting your family. If you make less than that, you qualify for Federal Government assistance. So we are saying to employers: If you will pay at least \$15 an hour, we will give you this tax credit.

Third, provide quality health insurance for your employees consistent with the Affordable Care Act.

Fourth, help your employees prepare for retirement. We want to reward companies that offer at least 90 percent of their employees a defined benefit plan, such as a pension plan or a defined contribution plan with decent employer contributions.

Fifth, employ a diverse workforce. We want companies to have a plan in place to help veterans and people with disabilities. I don't think that is too much to ask. We grab our flags and march in parades as politicians and thank the veterans over and over. Why don't we thank them with a job? And let's reward the companies that do.

That is it, five conditions. And with these five conditions, these patriotic American companies would get a tax break. Wouldn't it be better for us to incentivize American companies to do the right thing rather than pay the moving expenses for those that want to leave the country? That is a choice. I think it is pretty simple.

I know it can be done because in Skokie, IL, there is a company doing it. It is called Block Steel. The company started 100 years ago and has grown to be the largest distributor of aluminized steel in the Nation. It is a family-run business. It has ensured that 77 employees are treated fairly. Each of their employees is paid more than \$15 an hour, has good health care, and a good retirement. Block Steel should be rewarded for its efforts. Under the Patriot Employer Tax Credit Act, Block Steel could qualify for a tax credit of up to \$100,000. That is money they can invest in their business and grow it, with even more people working.

As this debate about tax reform continues, I hope we focus on rewarding companies that really care about America. We shouldn't be blindly focused on a race to the bottom to the lowest wages. And, I might add, this is paid for. It is paid for by eliminating the deduction for moving businesses overseas that is currently part of the Tax Code.

So let's reform the Tax Code the right way, with an eye on helping the workers get a decent paycheck, decent benefits, and rewarding the companies that put American workers first.

I thank Senators SHERROD BROWN, ELIZABETH WARREN, JACK REED, TAMMY BALDWIN, and BERNIE SANDERS for lending their support to this important bill. I look forward to continuing our fight for working families here in the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.